

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

MAYOR LOUISE E. SCHILLING

Delivered at the Troy Community Center, February 5, 2008

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to address you today as Mayor of the City of Troy. I was fascinated to read last month in the Oakland Business Review that our state's top economic development czar, James Epolito, has been spending a lot of time arguing that Michigan needs a new mindset. The president and CEO of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation said that people need to stop bad-mouthing Michigan and our economic shortcomings. While we could agree with what he said that it's a lot easier to be negative than positive, I am of that mindset that there is a whole lot of things right with Michigan and especially Troy, Michigan!

Winston Churchill said, "Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference" and also said "I am an optimist. It does not seem too much use being anything else. "

Indeed. I'm here, ladies and gentlemen, to say the State of this City is very positive because everywhere I turn I find residents, business owners and employees in Troy that have not given up on Michigan and most importantly on Troy. They are buying, reinvesting, renovating, and constructing new homes and businesses in our community.

As our City Manager Phil Nelson tells us, while there is talk of a recession, the City of Troy chooses not to participate. Now that is positive thinking!

Fellow citizens of Troy, Council members, City Manager Nelson, members of the City Administration, Business Leaders and guests, it is with great pleasure that I address you in the great City of Troy. Although times have been tough in Michigan the last few years, Troy continues to grow and prosper. There is so much happening in our City related to residential and business development that we should all keep a positive outlook just like James Epolito encourages.

As I sit down with our City Council members along with our Management team during the upcoming weeks to put together a fiscally responsible budget for 2008-09, we as Troy residents and business leaders should remember how very fortunate we are to live and work in one of the highest rated communities for our service, economy, public safety, schools and trained workforce. Our quality of life is second to none.

In that same issue of Oakland Business Review I referred to, they had the list of the Top 100 Employers in Oakland County. Of course Troy tops the list with 32 of the 100 Top employers having a presence in our community. Troy's companies are employing people from within Troy and all throughout this region. Troy's employment centers range from financial institutions such as National City, Flagstar and Bank of America; to industrial and commercial giants such as Arvin Meritor, Kelly Services, and Delphi. Other major employers are Acument Global Technologies, the Troy School District, The Bower Company, Entech Personnel Services, and Cadence Innovation.

We can also boast having 8 of the top 20 largest auto dealers in Oakland County located right here in Troy. And of the 2007 Health Care Capital Projects, four in Troy totaled \$268 million, nearly half the value of all health care projects in Oakland County.

And as Michigan was shocked with the closing of all Farmer Jacks grocery stores, the City of Troy breathed a sigh of relief as Kroger purchased all three locations within the City and continued operations.

We do have a lot to be proud of! As Author/Philosopher William James said, "The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes."

If all those reasons I have just touched on are not enough to keep your attitude as positive as mine, consider these facts...

- Troy is the 12th largest city in Michigan and the second-largest city in the state based on total property value.
- Troy is located in Oakland County, one of the five most prosperous counties in the United States.
- Troy has the third-largest property value in the state of Michigan at nearly \$12.8 billion, with property values increasing more than 62% over the last decade.

- Troy offers real property tax abatement for plant rehabilitation
- Troy has the lowest tax rate of any major city in Oakland County — 9.28 mills — and has maintained 9.48 or less for the past 10 years.
- Troy is home to several Fortune 500 businesses including Flagstar Bank, Delphi, ArvinMeritor and Kelly Services, which provide the center post for three world-class business districts: Northfield Parkway, Big Beaver Corridor and Maple Road Corridor.
- Business incentives in Troy include Hi-Tech Personal Property Tax Abatement Program, Local Development Finance Authority, Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and the Downtown Development Authority in the Big Beaver Corridor Area.
- Employees at Troy businesses can get information on education, child care, health, and community resources by visiting www.troyworkperks.com.

Troy definitely is a great place to live, work, operate a business, learn and play. People choose to live in Troy because it provides the best of what we need in excellent balance. Case in point - did you know that Relocate: America, a company that assists individuals relocating to a new community, has named the Troy School District one of the 25 best districts in the nation and the City of Troy as one of the top 100 communities for individuals searching for a new community!

In these tight economic times, Troy continues to provide the very best in City services while keeping our tax rate one of the lowest in Oakland County. We have very dedicated and loyal City employees who continue to serve our residents each and every day. We offer excellent services to our residential and corporate citizens. Our City services are second to none and because of this we cannot ignore our City staff that carry out the day-to-day operations and are dedicated to serving the Troy citizens. From our building department staff working with residents and contractors pulling permits to the snowplow drivers clearing our 360 miles of roads and consistently doing so ahead of their rigorous completion goals. From our dedicated Police Officers and Fire Fighters working 24/7 to keep our City safe to the Library staff who are there to answer our questions or help us find that perfect book, it's the day-to-day operations, which are vitally important for our residential needs.

Our excellent customer service is proven by the numerous awards and honors that the City and various departments have earned over the past year, including:

Troy was one of four local cities identified as a top performer for attracting and retaining entrepreneurial companies in a study by the University of Michigan-Dearborn School of Management. City Manager Phil Nelson and Assistant City Manager Brian Murphy are working diligently with their staff on business development and retention as this is one of our important goals...to retain and attract investment while encouraging redevelopment.

Troy has a triple A bond rating from Standard & Poor's, Fitch, IBCA and Moody's Investor Service. For the 8th consecutive year, the City of Troy received all three of the International Government Finance Officers Association Awards for the City Budget Document, the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and the City of Troy 2006 Financial Summary. Thanks goes out to Assistant City Manager John Lamerato and his team as we work on another balanced budget this year.

The Michigan Association of Planning selected the City's Big Beaver Corridor Study, which proposes to transform Big Beaver Road from an automobile-dominant suburban corridor into a pedestrian-friendly urban destination, for the Outstanding Planning Project Award for 2007. City Planner Mark Miller and his staff, along with Carlisle Wortman & Associates and the Troy Planning Commission have finalized the draft Master Plan. Public Input workshops will be held at the end of this month for review and comment by our residents.

The Troy Public Library ranked second in Michigan for public libraries of all sizes based on nationally gathered statistics in 2005 and 2006. I am sure that you are all aware that our Troy Public Library offers a full complement of services for children, youth, families, adults and seniors. It houses more than 300,000 books, books on CD, music CDs, DVD movies, magazines and education games. We can now boast the very first Special Needs Collection providing learning opportunities for those with developmental disabilities. And last year, our Library circulated more than 1.5 million items. Our Library also has a very active schedule of sponsored programs with over 19,000 children's participants and over 11,000 participants in adult and young adult programs last year.

Our new Library Director Cathy Russ and her staff are ready to take us into the future. But we all know that what we need is more space!

The Troy City Council just received a copy of the Space Needs Assessment and Outline Building Program for the Troy Public Library prepared by George Lawson and Fanning/Howey Associates. This information will be available to the public in the very near future.
Did you know that...?

- Troy Residents borrow 92.5 percent of all materials circulated at the Library.
- 15 percent of the Library's non-fiction collection is checked out at any given time – compared to the 3 to 5 percent typical of comparable libraries. This illustrates an educated community, with broad and deep interests.
- In 2004, Troy Public Library received the Library of Michigan's Citation of Excellence for incorporating services necessary to serve a diverse citizenry – International Language Collections for youth & adults, Talk Time Conversation Group, and additional programs that reflect Troy.
- Troy Public Library attracts over 15,000 visitors each week.

Basically, the space needs assessment process suggests approximately 124,000 gross square feet will be needed to serve Troy's library service needs through the year 2030. A new library is definitely in the works for Troy's future.

Another major reason people and businesses choose to call Troy home is safety and security. On the subject of safety the 14th annual analysis of FBI Crime reports once again placed Troy as the safest city in Michigan. We also remain in the top 20 of safest cities in the United States. Thanks to Police Chief Charles Craft and his dedicated team of professionals, we know that Troy will continue to be one of Michigan's safest communities.

The Troy Fire Department has earned 11 Life Safety Achievement Awards, recognizing a continual effort of no fatalities in structure fires, in the past 11 years. Fire Chief Bill Nelson and his team of professionals, both career and volunteer fire fighters ensure that Troy is a very safe place to live and work.

Because of these tight economic times, our City Staff are constantly challenged to do more with less. Rest assured that our employees are constantly finding new and innovative ways to save your tax dollars while offering the same excellent quality services. The Troy Purchasing Department received the 2007 Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award by the National Purchasing Institute. That is now five years in a row. We are one of only 31 cities nationwide to win this prestigious national award at least five times. Thanks to Purchasing Director Susan Leirstein and her staff!

Troy's Fleet Maintenance Division under the leadership of Sam Lamerato, was named second best fleet in North America based on outstanding performance for fleet operations. They were also awarded the Blue Seal of Excellence through the Automotive Service Excellence Program, with 15 of the 17 Fleet Maintenance employees being ASE certified, several holding double master certifications in auto and medium/ heavy truck. Troy also engages in many partnerships bringing in revenue to the City. Our Fleet Maintenance Division services the Clawson Fire Department fleet as well as fleets for the Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority and South Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority. We also have contracts to provide services to Royal Oak and Birmingham.

The City launched our new radio station, WQGH 1670 AM that broadcasts news programs, special events and other activities happening in Troy. Our Troy Web site, along with the Parks and Facilities brochure, received awards of excellence from APEX, an annual competition for writers, editors, publication staff and business and nonprofit communicators. These along with our professionally developed communication tools including the City Calendar & Annual Report, quarterly Troy Today newsletter, Troy Community Guide and the recent Troy Economic Resource Guide are just a few ways that our Community Affairs Department led by Cindy Stewart and her talented staff work on yet another City goal...to effectively and professionally communicate externally and internally.

The American Red Cross again recognized the City of Troy's Community Blood Drive and the Troy City Employees with two platinum awards of excellence for outstanding commitment to its blood donation program. On Fridays, you will see City Employees wearing jeans to work. For this casual dress privilege, they contribute money to our local non-profit organizations. They raised close to \$2500 in 6 months last year. So, while our dedicated employees continue to offer quality service, they also find time to give back to our community!

While our City Staff has been working hard to meet the needs of our residents, our business community continues to invest, grow and prosper in Troy. Following the trends of recent years many new businesses moved to Troy and existing

companies expanded during the past year making 2007 a very active year for Troy. We continue to see growth in our residential and business development even during these tight economic times.

Through December, the number of building permits issued totaled 1,715 with a permit valuation totaling over \$114 million. Single family dwelling permits totaled 58 and 19 permits for Condos. Back in 2005, the office vacancy rate along the Big Beaver Corridor was 20%. Today we show a 12 – 13 percent vacancy rate thanks to movement coming into some of our major office buildings such as the National City Center, the Columbia Center and the AT&T building. The new housing projects as well as the new business developments moving into Troy are a positive boost for our local, regional and state economy.

Many projects occurred in 2007 to keep Troy on the map as we continue to build for the future. In the field of technology and automotive:

- Behr America, a leading global supplier of automotive engine-cooling and air-conditioning systems, completed construction on its \$8.5 million, three-story North American corporate campus in Troy. This project is Behr's second major expansion in three years. Behr also put a \$15 million investment into their wind tunnel and acoustics lab, one of the worlds most advanced testing facilities for vehicle thermal management.
- Compact Power Inc., a local battery supplier in Troy, took energy efficiency to a new level by signing contracts with General Motors to help develop high-tech battery packs to be used in the Chevrolet Volt. They also kicked off the new year by announcing it had won a \$12.9 million contract to develop lithium-ion battery technology for plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. This is a 27-month contract approved by the United States Advanced Battery Consortium which is comprised of GM, Ford and Chrysler.
- Troy-based Illumisys, Inc. was formed in 2007 as a spin-off venture and wholly owned subsidiary of Altair Engineering. They are focused on developing next-generation, solid-state lighting technology. Illumisys has been awarded multiple patents for fluorescent replacement lights. As part of its Michigan Diversification Celebration, the MEDC along with our Governor, honored Illumisys for outstanding achievement in alternative energy.
- SDE MRO Express, a subsidiary of SDE Business Partnering, opened its doors in Troy. This company, which manages the maintenance, repair and operations procurement and service operations for Chrysler Groups U.S. and Canadian facilities, created more than 200 jobs and houses the country's largest customer care call center.
- LMS North America, a Belgium-based engineering partner in the automotive and aerospace industries, announced its plans for a \$600,000 expansion in Troy, which, in turn, will create more than 100 jobs.
- Kostal of America, a German-based auto supplier, moved its regional headquarters to Troy at 350 Stephenson, translating into \$13.6 million in capital investment and the creation of more than 200 jobs.
- Troy-based auto supplier ArvinMeritor joined with Chery Automobile Co. to design and supply chassis systems for the Chinese automaker. This venture is expected to generate \$150 million in annual revenue and secure a stronger foothold for ArvinMeritor Inc. in China's fast-growing auto market.
- ArvinMeritor's own Charles "Chip" McClure was awarded Automation Alley's 2007 "Legend CEO" award. Chip has more than 25 years of leadership experience in the motor vehicle industry. Here is another example of a visible leader who is very interested in promoting the positives of southeast Michigan.
- Seco Tools, Inc., a world leader in metalworking technologies, broke ground for the relocation of its NAFTA headquarters to Troy. The new location, a two-story, 81,000 square foot building on Bellingham just south of Big Beaver Road in the Automation Alley Technology Park will be completed later this year. Seco president Kurt Nordlund said they chose Troy because it best fit their needs, as one of the most progressive and modern cities in Michigan offering many amenities including our first class restaurants and hotels and easy access to freeways.
- Champion Enterprises' World Headquarters relocated to Troy. A leader in the production of manufactured and modular homes, Champion Enterprises moved to Troy after contemplating North Carolina as a possible place to relocate. They will occupy two floors in the National City Center on Big Beaver.
- Valeo, a France-based auto supplier with current operations in Auburn Hills, also relocated to Troy. The independent industrial group focuses on design, production and the sale of components, systems and modules for cars and truck. The company has more than 71,000 employees situated within 29 countries.
- Continental Structural Plastics, who recently relocated to Troy, acquired the Budd Plastics Division of ThyssenKrupp Budd, making CSP the largest industrial-composites molder in North America.
- Troy received two of 25 annually-given Mega Grants from the State of Michigan. The grants were received for Grid4 and Lender Live. Grid4 is expected to be one of the fastest growing companies in the telecommunications industry. They acquired a 33,000-square-foot office building and hired more than 30 new employees. The building will house a state-of-the-art data and technology center and training facilities.
- The web development and e-learning firm Media Genesis is leveraging this area's strengths in technical and creative talent to build a growing, diversified multimedia powerhouse and raise the region's profile for high technology. We are so pleased to welcome Media Genesis back to Troy, with the purchase of their 35,000

square foot facility on Maple Road. The owners plan to add 150 new jobs in the next few years, solidifying the company as a national player in the field of digital communications. They are just one more example of positive thinking that makes our community great.

- CareTech Solutions, a Troy company for eight years, expanded their roots in the City by taking over an additional 7,000-square-feet in the Wilshire Building and hired 27 new staffers in web development. CareTech is an IT company that provides services to health care systems and insurance companies.
- Troy-based TradeMasters focused on providing technical support software for manufacturing companies, saw a 50 percent revenue growth in the past two years thanks to its MobileEyes fire inspection software. They now have clients in 11 states around the country.
- Credential Check Corporation of Troy has seen revenue soar 570 percent since 2001 and 40 to 45 percent in 2007. Credential Check changed its focus to pre-employment investigations and has 700 clients nationally.

On the financial horizon, we also saw many positives...

- World Alliance Financial Corp. chose our city over Jacksonville, Florida to locate a new regional headquarters for the rapidly growing provider of financial services. World Alliance Financial specializes in residential and reverse mortgage loans. Their new headquarters investment of \$835,000 will include a mortgage originator/call center; corporate data center and regional administrative services creating over 600 jobs.
- LenderLive Network, Inc. is investing \$7.4 million to expand their current facility in Troy at 888 W. Big Beaver with the addition of a 30,000-square-foot Data and Operation Center. Their expansion will also allow for the creation of nearly 850 new jobs, including 350 directly in Troy, over the next five years.
- Bank of America's Troy headquarters demonstrated their dedication not only to the City but also the environment by becoming the first existing building in Michigan to achieve a U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design designation.
- Huntington Bank, a sponsor of this event, was recognized as one of the Nation's Best Banks for Small Businesses. Huntington was named a national award winner in four categories including Overall Customer Satisfaction, Branch Services, Cash Management Services and Online Services.
- Peoples State Bank opened their 12th branch at Livernois and Long Lake.
- T&C Federal Credit Union celebrated the opening of their 12th branch on John R at Long Lake. They have grown to more than \$585 million in assets and over 64,000 members.
- The new Independent Bank opened up after renovations on Rochester Road in the old Midwest Guaranty Bank.

In the field of Health Care, Troy also saw positive advancement...

- In 2007, Troy Beaumont Hospital celebrated its 30th anniversary and once again ranks among the best of the best in high-quality care and efficiency as the facility was placed among the country's top 100 hospitals. Troy Beaumont also broke ground on a \$220 million expansion that will renovate an existing emergency department as well as build a five-story critical care tower, a 129,000-square-foot ambulatory care building, professional building, and more.
- Special Tree/Troy Neuro Skills Center outgrew their previous location and moved to an expanded location at 600 Stephenson. The new center is 16,000 square feet and houses an outpatient center and administrative and facility maintenance offices for the entire Oakland/Macomb region.
- Heartland Health Care Center opened their 27th Michigan health care center in Troy on South Boulevard. The center which employees approximately 100 people, offers services for short term patients transitioning from hospital to home.
- The former Maple Athletic Center was redeveloped into Truvista, a medical office building specializing in eye surgeries.

On the retail side of the story...

- Oakland Mall was purchased in November by Chicago-based Urban Retail Properties. They are planning major renovations as well as changes to their current tenant lineup and a new market plan for the site. We said goodbye to one of our premiere developers, Mr. Jay Kogan who developed the Oakland Mall in 1968. Jay passed away in September at the age of 85.
- Caswell Town Center, a planned unit development at the southeast corner of Rochester Road and South Boulevard got underway in 2007. The retail component of the 21 acre mixed-use development got off the ground first. Be sure and check out the stores already opened including Starbucks, Ink Stop, GRS Salon and Salsarita's. They have also begun construction on the single family homes component. North Rochester Road is really looking good.

- Somerset Collection added some new stores including Salvatore Ferragamo, Michael Kors, Allen Edmunds, Forever 21 and Journeys.
- The Troy Motor Mall expanded its offerings as the Suburban Collection opened the doors to a brand new Hyundai showroom in 2007.
- Restaurant Depot, a food wholesaler for businesses, opened its 65th store in the City of Troy on Maple Road. They also supply paper goods, cleaning items and equipment.
- Wireless Giant opened a new “first of its kind” mobile lounge in Troy’s Oakland Mall.

And of course, Troy never can have enough restaurants within our boundaries.

- Spring 2007, we welcomed Kona Grill, best know for American favorites and award-winning sushi. In the true spirit of community, the Kona Grill hosted a fabulous fundraiser as part of their grand opening raising money for the Troy Historical Society’s Heritage Campaign. Kona Grill has added new life to the southeast corner of Big Beaver and Livernois with a very distinctive dining experience in a building that recently won one of the Best of Troy Awards recognizing projects that best exemplify financial investment and aesthetic enhancement within our community.

Smaller food establishments included

- Buscemi’s Italian Market celebrated 19 years in business with a newly constructed location on Rochester Road and an expanded menu with tasty food offerings.
- Insalata Eatery, which is located in the Troy Sports Center, offers a unique and fresh eating experience.
- Grand Traverse Pie Company where homemade pies are their passion opened up on Maple Road. Stop by to check out their delicious menu of food items plus the mouth-watering pies.
- Entrée Vous brings the City of Troy its very first assembly kitchen where families can prepare home cooked meals in advance.

Small businesses are also thriving for many who have found a home in the City of Troy. Just a handful of those who were welcomed into the City in 2007 include:

MilMar Financial opened in March on Rochester Road, financing homes with all the largest lenders while giving clients the attention of a small company.

Fox Studios, on Rochester Road, specializing in portraits for all occasions.

Snap Fitness, on Wattles Road, providing a 24-hour fitness facility for members;

Great Clips, on Rochester Road, providing great-looking haircuts at affordable prices.

FedEx Kinkos opened their second store in Troy on Crooks Road.

Agrusa International Marketplace opened a new location in Troy at the northwest corner of Rochester and Long Lake.

While all this development has been occurring, Troy remains environmentally conscious.

- Troy’s Sylvan Glen Golf Course Streambank Restoration Project was named Project of the Year in 2007 by the Michigan Chapter of the American Public Works Association. This project, which was in the category of “Environmental Projects Under \$2 Million,” ensures that the stream bank will remain an uncontaminated and stable habitat for the future.
- Attempting to further preserve the environment, thanks to the hard work of the Troy Chamber of Commerce, the City of Troy will soon be the permanent home of a 700 square foot solar home, built by Lawrence Technological University students. It runs just on energy from the sun. ALOeTERRA (meaning to nourish the earth), was designed for the U.S. Department of Energy’s Solar Decathlon held in Washington, D.C. this past October. The home is a full-functioning display. Students had to use materials that were readily available in today’s marketplace. ALOeTERRA shows that the “home of the future” has practices we could start using today. At its new home here in Troy, ALOeTERRA will be used for tours and inspections by builders, as well as meetings, and energy and environmental programs in the solar home.
- Cedar Pines of Troy became the first “green-built” subdivision in Troy as each of the 31 homes uses 52 percent less electricity, 54 percent less gas and 46 percent less water than a normal new home.

The City of Troy with sponsorship from some of our local businesses, also hosted our first Shades of Green conference for commercial property and business owners. We are trying to spread the message...Go Green, Save Green and Get Green.

And speaking about residential development, the City saw many new residential projects including Briggs Park, Carlton Villas, Hidden Forest, Colleen Meadows, Timber Crest, Village of Tuscany, Stone Haven Park and Caswell Town Center.

Troy would not be the excellent City it is without a high quality educational component. People move here because of our exceptional schools. Our Troy School District, as well as the other six school districts that service Troy plus our institutions for higher education excell. Our students continue to perform at levels that are among the highest at state and national levels. Student performance on standardized tests such as the MEAP, ACT and SAT continues to demonstrate how our community values the importance of an exemplary school district. Some highlights of 2007 include:

- Expansion Management Magazine, a publication which helps companies relocate to other communities, named Troy Public Schools its top honor, a gold award, in its 16th annual Education Quotient Rating Program.
- For the second year, The Troy School District was named one of the "Best 100 Communities for Music Education in American" by the American Music Conference.
- Newsweek Magazine named both Troy and Athens High Schools among the top 4 percent of all high schools nationwide.
- Thanks to the Troy community, our school facilities have been completely upgraded with new additions, a new Baker Middle School, new technology, and renovations at every school facility in the Troy School District. The improvements ensure that our school facilities reflect the high standards our community expects from its public services.
- Baker Middle School and Morse Elementary are entering the second year of a three-year International Baccalaureate implementation program. The old Baker building is being renovated to become the East Campus of the International Academy and it will also house the GROW program. Renovations will be complete this August as they will open to 150 High School freshmen. Along with tough courses and challenging academic assignments, these students can also expect to compete head-on for acceptance to top colleges and universities.
- Two Troy students Chi Song and Victoria Choe earned a perfect score of 36 on their ACT exam. On average Michigan students score 21.5 and nationally students score 21.2. A perfect Act score is earned by approximately 1 in about 6,000 students.
- Troy's Walsh College recently celebrated the grand opening of the 36,000 square foot environmentally sustainable building addition. The Jeffrey W. Barry Center contains an expanded modern library, auditorium and additional classrooms, all designed to meet U.S. Green Building Council LEED - Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design designation.
- Saginaw Valley State University opened a new facility for graduate study in the Niles Center. The Oakland Regional Education Center offers courses for master of arts in teaching, master of education and education specialist degree programs.
- Beaumont Hospital announced a partnership with Oakland University to create a new medical school on Oakland's campus. The privately funded medical school will be the first medical school in Oakland County. The charter class should be admitted in 2010. According to the American Association of Medical Colleges, the economic impact of medical schools and teaching hospitals equals \$451 billion nationwide. In Michigan alone that impact is \$18 billion, and 122,000 Michigan citizens are employed by medical schools and teaching hospitals.

We also like to boast about Troy's Lifestyles being second to none. We know we're a great place to live, work, learn and do business, but playing is also very important. This is evident by our quality Parks & Recreation department and the variety of programs suited for all ages and abilities. Not many communities can boast having close to 900 acres of parklands and two championship public golf courses.

- Money received from the federal Community Development Block Grant program was put to good use developing a new neighborhood park on the south side of Maple Road, just west of Milverton, between Dequindre and John R roads.
- The Troy Community Coalition for the Prevention of Drug and Alcohol Abuse was recently awarded two grants from the Office of National Drug Control Policy. These grants, which total \$150,000, will enable the continuation of providing prevention activities, programs and services to residents. The grants will also allow for the Troy Coalition to mentor the newly formed North Oakland Coalition.

Troy's future does indeed look bright with plans for the Pavilions of Troy and our new Transit Center coming to fruition.

The former headquarters of Kmart, located near Big Beaver Road and Coolidge Highway, will soon be transformed into the "Pavilions of Troy," a retail center planned for the 35-acre site on the northwest corner of Big Beaver and Coolidge. Demolition plans are underway for this spring. The Pavilions of Troy will transform this property from a sprawling empty office campus to a vibrant mixed-use community. Opening in 2010 and planning to be developed over a 10-year period at a cost of over \$300 million, the first phase of The Pavilions will consist of a dynamic mix of residential, retail, entertainment venues, office and public spaces.

The Pavilions of Troy will enhance Troy's world-class development and will add a unique economic driver in metropolitan Detroit while serving as a centerpiece for community life in Troy. A community town square featuring "pavilions" in a park-like setting will form the core and will be surrounded by retail shopping, offices, theater, restaurants, fitness center, hotel, and residences.

Four teams of visiting and local design professionals, U of M faculty and student urban designers, architects, urban planners and landscape architects presented their designs and visions for the proposed Troy/Birmingham Transit Center district near Maple and Coolidge last month. The project was unique in that it will be located midway between downtown Birmingham and the financial and shopping hub of Troy's Big Beaver corridor. The City of Troy is very appreciative that our project was chosen to be studied by these four teams of faculty, professionals and the U of M students because an improved regional transit system and associated development could mean huge revenues and economic growth potential for both Troy and Birmingham. One of the proposed designs and visions or a combination just might be part of our transit plans.

While I have talked a lot about the past year, let us not forget about our future. We need to constantly plan for developments that will meet the needs of our residents as we move into the future. We are inviting our residential and business community to give us input on the new draft Master Plan just like we did with the Big Beaver Corridor Study and Vision 2020. The City of Troy is always looking forward. And because of that visionary attitude there are a lot of exciting things about to happen that will ensure Troy makes it through these tough economic times.

From the words of the late, great President John F. Kennedy, "When written in Chinese, the word crisis is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity."

In spite of what is going on all around us, our Future looks very positive and solid. We have a lot of opportunities for our current and future residents and businesses. You have my personal commitment to continue to lead with a professional and positive attitude but vigilant and truthful in my duties as Mayor representing you and expecting excellence for our community. Let's all work together and make opportunities!